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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [JM](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: JAMAICA: PRIME MINISTER GOLDING SHUFFLES CABINET
ELIMINATING THREE MINISTERS

REF: A. (A) 08 KINGSTON 421 (131527Z MAY 08)
[1](#)B. (B) 08 KINGSTON 1040 (101902Z DEC 08)
[1](#)C. (C) KINGSTON 232 (251152Z MAR 09)

Classified By: Charge James T. Heg for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) At the Prime Minister's request, Trevor MacMillan, Derrick Smith and Clive Mullings all resigned their cabinet positions Security, Telecommunications, and Energy respectively, on April 6. MacMillan, Smith and Mullings were replaced by three Ministers without portfolio already within the Cabinet: Dwight Nelson - new Minister of National Security; James Robertson new Minister of Energy and Mining; and Daryl Vaz - new Minister of Telecommunications and Information. Golding's intention to shuffle his Cabinet had been rumored for months. His choice to draw from present Cabinet members is likely due to two factors: first, the need for the GOJ to shrink the budget for ministerial salaries; second, the thinness of the ruling Jamaica Labor Party's bench. End Summary.

Minister of National Security

[1](#)2. (C) Trevor MacMillan's tenure began in early 2008, and there were great expectations of his ability to bring energy and focus to a ministry that had lost direction and lacked momentum under MacMillan's predecessor, Derrick Smith (reftel A). MacMillan unfortunately did not live up to expectations and seemed to lack the political will to push forward stated key agenda items such as implementation of the Police Strategic Review (released in June 08), and development of a national intelligence/investigative agency. He also seemed unable to turn words into action. He would regularly refer to the "MacMillan Plan" as the guiding security strategy, a document he had written ten years before his ascent to the Minister's chair. Near the end of his tenure, MacMillan suffered from poor health and became dubbed the "cocktail minister" in the society pages for his predilection to attend receptions and other social events. The parting political cartoon after his resignation has MacMillan walking into the sunset with his golf clubs on his back.

[1](#)3. (C) Golding chose Dwight Nelson, a former labor leader, and most recently Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance, to replace MacMillan. Nelson may seem an odd choice at first glance, as he has no security experience. Golding seemingly has picked him based upon his reputation as a good manager and strong performer as Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance. Golding is likely relying upon Nelson's number two, Maj. Richard Reese, who has extensive experience as a former military officer and Head of the Correctional Service, to backstop any technical gaps in Nelson's knowledge. Indeed, if Nelson provides the political gravitas, and Reese the technical details, this unusual posting of a Laborite to the Ministry of National Security might turn out to be one of Golding's better decisions. (Note: Another rumor circulating is that if Nelson is not a proper fit, Golding may be grooming Daryl Vaz for the position in the future, see below. The appointment of Vaz to such a sensitive position would encounter significant resistance from the public).

14. (C) James Robertson, the new Minister of Mines and Energy, is young, wealthy, and seems to enjoy portraying both a "gangsta" veneer and one of a polo-playing social animal. (Note: In late 2006, Robertson came to the U.S. Embassy to meet with EmbOffs carrying no identification but rounds of ammunition in his pockets). Robertson replaces Clive Mullings. Mullings, fall from grace was a bit surprising, as he was considered a star performer for the JLP when the party was in opposition. Mullings was long on speeches and public performances, but short on results. His primary success was the roll out of e-10 ethanol (10 percent ethanol-gasoline) at fuel stations. In May 2008, the Telecommunications mantle was taken from Mullings and given to Derrick Smith. At the time, that move was viewed as having more to do with assuaging Smith's bruised ego following his removal as Minister of National Security. Looking back however, perhaps that was the first signal of Golding's disapproval of Mullings' flash-but-no-substance approach to his work. Mullings further angered Golding and his JLP colleagues in November 2008, when he fired Ian Moore, then the Chairman of the Petroleum Cooperation of Jamaica, and a financial backer of the JLP. It was clear that Moore, and not Mullings, held JLP favor, when just a few days later at the party's annual conference Moore was given a seat on the main platform.

Minister of Information and Telecommunications and Special Projects (Office of the Prime Minister)

15. (C) Daryl Vaz, one of the JLP's "Young Turks," was chosen by Golding to replace the ailing Minister of Telecommunications, Derrick Smith, who has long suffered with serious diabetes. (Note: in late 2007 Smith went to the U.S. for surgery due to gangrenous toes, a result of his inability to manage his illness). Vaz also assumes the Information portfolio from the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Olivia 'Babsy' Grange, and was appointed as Minister Without Portfolio for Special Projects in the Office of the Prime Minister. Vaz is currently a JLP Star; he recently won a landslide victory in a by-Election (reftel C), thus giving the ruling party political momentum at a time when Golding's Government is mired in problems (reftel B). It is no surprise that Vaz, whom Golding has long viewed as a "doer," was rewarded for his recent victory with a ministerial appointment. As with many politicians in Jamaica, there have been persistent rumors about Vaz's alleged links to Jamaica's powerful criminal underworld -- yet, nothing of sufficient substance to prevent Golding from bringing him into the Cabinet.

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